

## OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PHARMACOPŒIA COLLEGII REGALIS

MEDICORUM LONDINENSIS, &amp;c.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

---

*Price* THREE SHILLINGS.



OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
PHARMACOPŒIA COLLEGII REGALIS  
MEDICORUM LONDINENSIS, 1788;  
ANNEXED TO THE  
OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
SPECIMEN ALTERUM PHARMACOPŒIÆ  
LONDINENSIS, 1787:  
POINTING OUT  
MANY OF THEIR STRIKING DEFECTS,  
AND SHEWING THE  
NECESSITY FOR STILL FURTHER CORRECTIONS;  
INTERSPERSED WITH  
A VARIETY of FORMULÆ from the SPECIMEN, and  
other new ones introduced:  
IN A  
LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE COMMITTEE,  
SELECTED OUT OF THE  
MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,  
TO REFORM THE  
OLD PHARMACOPŒIA.

---

“ Ante omnia Physicus philosophus sibi eligat principia vera, & certa, quæ  
“ fluunt ex rectâ Ratione cum Experienciâ conjuncta; fugiat autem,  
“ Cane pejus & Angue, quæ figmenta, Superstitiones, & Imaginationes  
“ pro fundamento habent.”—HOFFMAN.

---





## A P P E N D I X.

*Observations on the Pharmacopœia Collegii  
Regalis Medicorum Londinensis, 1788.*

WHEN we published our observations on the second specimen of the work produced now to the public, in its most perfect form, we presume agreeable to your conceptions, under the title of PHARMACOPŒIA COLLEGII REGALIS MEDICORUM LONDINENSIS, we laid before you a number of errors which required correction, you have in some degree attended to them, though not with that candor, which manifests true nobleness of mind; but have adopted our ideas with respect to the visible necessity, of alteration, and crept only a little nearer the path of scientific knowledge; leaving your work, in many places, not so complete as it ought to have been, and in others still extremely erroneous. We therefore think it a duty incumbent upon us to pay you another friendly visit, and convince you, if obstinacy and self-consequence are not the standing orders of your associated body, that there is still a large field open for critical investigation; and that had you adopted more freely the hints we gave you, or something

a

adequate

adequate to them, you would have come nearer at least to that perfection, which you are bound by every social, moral, and religious tie, in all your publications to attempt. And as we shall have occasion to refer back to our former work on this subject, we have chosen to add this to it by way of Appendix; particularly as many of our remarks there still maintain their full force. That the world may judge between us, how far we have merited attention, how much you have observed our directions, and in what manner you have evaded the confession, by laboring to deviate as much as you could from the different plans pointed out to you, and adopting something as similar as the nature of your subject would permit, joined to an earnest desire and fixed determination to hide the fountain from whence they were derived. But as we always endeavour to make consistency and perspicuity in scientific disquisitions our pilots, and truth the harbor to which we steer, we are satisfied in having our intents accomplished by any means; better pleased to see them appear in any work in which we are allowed to have no share, than to have one of so much consequence to the welfare of mankind as yours launched into the world, under the sanction of royal authority, in any single point by them unsupported.—It is not nobleness of birth that constitutes nobleness of character, “MANNERS ALONE DIGNIFY THE MAN;” and he who deviates from the path of honor, disgraces  
and



and blurs with infamy that rank on which he prides himself. So it is in your department. Error cannot live, though it should be mounted on the wonders of the world, and guarded by the Colossian pillars of medico-collegiate consequence. Truth from the pen of a non-significant would tumble it from its elevation, and lay it prostrate at the feet of its arbitrary advocates.—In proof, then, let us try the experiment.

In the *Materia medica* you have made choice of the Linnæan system, inserted some of the amendments which we pointed out to you, and seem, from the hints which were given, to have more closely examined this matter. But why is there such a striking irregularity still remains; an irregularity so strong as cannot escape the observation of any man at all conversant in natural history? Certainly those products which are sufficiently known, should have been distinguished by their scientific names; whilst those of whose knowledge there still remained some doubt, either not distinguished by that name, or put down as dubious.

In the animal kingdom, why are the following left undistinguished? There certainly can be no sufficient reason for their remaining in an undetermined state; they with great propriety might stand in the subsequent order:

Adeps fuillæ	—Sus scrofa. Linnæi. Systematis Naturæ.
Coccinella	—Coccus cacti, L. S. N.
Castoreum Rufficum	—Castor fiber. L. S. N.
Cornu cervi	—Cervus elephus. L. S. N.
Cera flava alba mel	} —Apis mellifera. L. S. N.
Moschus	
Sevum oyillum	
Sperma ceti	—Phyfeter macrocephalus. L. S. N.

As an excuse for these omissions, or most of them, perhaps it will be said, they are too well known to need any specification. If so, why give the specific name to the oyster shells?

Testæ ostreorum —Ostrea edulis, L. S. N.

Pray, are they less known?

In the vegetable kingdom, what cause can be assigned for your similar conduct in the subsequent list?

Canella alba	—Winteriana canella, L. S. P.
Cascarilla	—Croton cascarilla, L. S. P.
Opium	—Papaver somnifer, L. S. P.
Gambogia	—Cambogia gutti. L. S. P.
Thuſ	—Juniperus lycia, L. S. P.

And several others of the characteristic name of which we reminded you in the former publication? See page 39 in the first part of this pamphlet.—For such omissions some sufficient reasons ought to have been advanced; otherwise there appears great negligence, much inconsistency, and a want of per-



perfpicuity ; which are faults highly reprehenfible in fo learned a body, who are thought to take the lead in the medical department ; who are confidered as perfect adepts in that momentous profef-  
 fion over which you prefide, and who, having generally adopted a fyftem, muft be fupposed to have fome caufe for omitting fuch a number of effential particulars, the product of the fame pen ; confequently ought in your own vindication, and in juftice to the author to produce, whatever may be the reafons for fo fingular a conduct ; otherwife the ARBITRIUM COLLEGII, we mean that, quod nutu gubernat, affumes fuperiority over philofophical investigation, and makes it fubfervient to the whim of its poffeffors. But you have in your preface told us, you are arbitrary, “ Quod ad nomina at-  
 “ tinet, *tribus falibus alkalinis*, PRO ARBITRIO NOS-  
 “ TRO impofita ;” for which you have affigned fome reafon, “ Ea fanè tantum in fe commoditatis, &  
 “ compendii, præ fe ferunt ;” and then court the forgivenefs of your medical brethren, “ Ut ve-  
 “ niam faltem apud medicos non immeritò fibi ven-  
 “ dicent.” This we fhould have paffed over compendii eorum gratiâ, had no better terms offered themfelves ; had they not been fhewn to you in the very fame place, where the neceffity of an alteration of the terms adopted in your SPECIMEN ALTERUM was manifested in fo clear a light, that it was impoffible for you to avoid your confent.

*See page 22, 23, of the firft part of this work.*—But

as the public, nay not even one ignorant individual, will be satisfied with *our* arbitrary fiat, we are obliged to prove our assertion by the force of fair argument, which we must build upon fact: and as such it will be allowed us; that wherever an alteration is to take place in the name of any article, one term made use of to supply the place of another should be the most unequivocal, and in this case the most concise; all probability of error avoided, and convenience supported.---You have made use of KALI for the *Alkali vegetabile*---we recommended POTASSA: you for the *Alkali minerale*, NATRON---we, SODA. Now with regard to conciseness and convenience, the terms are similar; but are they with regard to propriety? We say, No; for KALI, so called from the herb from whence an alkaline salt was extracted, produces the fossil alkali. MACQUER says, “Kali is a maritime plant, from the ashes of which a considerable quantity of mineral fixed alkali is obtained by lixiviation.” *Chem. Dict.* p. 357. And Dr. MONRO, in his Treatise on Medical and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, vol. i. page 134, tells us, when speaking of the fossil alkali, “that the greatest quantity of this alkaline salt that is at present used in this country is got from the ashes of the KALI, and other sea plants, &c.”---And Dr. LEWIS, “that the Kali is principally regarded on account of its yielding copiously when burnt the fixed alkaline salt called SODA, or Soudè;” and uses this

term



term for the mineral alkali itself. Here then, if we are allowed to be daring enough to wave the authority you usurp, we may venture to say, that there are objections sufficiently strong to your term. Now, as no such lie against the word POTASSA, recommended by us; as it has never been applied to any alkaline salt but the vegetable; as it is procured from wood, plants, and some other substance not maritime, in which there is no mineral alkali; and as it *always has* conveyed, and *universally* does convey, the idea of vegetable alkali only, it will not be presumption in us to assert, that it claims the preference in its application to the substance to that which you have adopted.

With respect to NATRON, it has been called NITRUM; Nitrum antiquorum, MACQUER says. “ NATRUM, or NATRON is a native alkaline salt  
 “ of the nature of the mineral, or marine alkaline, which is found crystallized in Ægypt, and  
 “ in some hot countries, in sands which surround  
 “ lakes of salt water. The crystallization is produced by the spontaneous evaporation of this  
 “ water; and as that water contains other salts  
 “ also, besides the mineral alkali, *the natron is not*  
 “ *a pure mineral alkali*, and is naturally found  
 “ mixed with other saline matters, and particularly with common salt:—the salt is said to be  
 “ the nitre of the antients.” Yet, notwithstanding



ing these objections, you affix the term to a substance which is confessed a pure mineral alkali; and reject the term by which this very pure alkali procured from this, and other substances, is denominated; for SODA is the name by which this is understood.—From what has been advanced, and we flatter ourselves satisfactorily proved to every candid reader, may we not fairly draw the following conclusions?

That from our observations on your SPECIMEN ALTERUM there appeared an absolute necessity for altering the terms of the vegetable, and mineral alkalies—That you were convinced of that necessity—That you adopted the idea; but that in order to avoid the supposition of your attention to us, you rejected the terms we proposed, and supplied their place with others infinitely more objectionable, though equally concise, because you could not bear the thought, “*ab hoste doceri*,” so called; for reformation was imagined to approach you in the form of severity; because you disdained to be dragooned into rectitude. Ill-formed conjecture! a little reflection would convince you that the very severity complained of, if it must be called severity, was founded on the most liberal principles. However, be that as it may, where the welfare of mankind is at stake, wherever royal patronage is solicited to protect, and legal authority to enforce compliance with the

the regulations in a work like yours, every improvement ought to be avidiously embraced, whether it comes from the cabinet of an old woman, or the physician of a king.

But to return to our subject ;---As you seem to have followed our plan of giving characteristic names to your compositions, indicating the ingredient of which they were formed, why have you not been throughout consistent? Why should not the *magnesia alba*, which only takes its name from its color, be called *magnesia aerata*, as you profess in your preface to have changed the names, “ Ut per titulos ipsos designetur quælibet compositio quid sit magis, quam quo valeat ; & potius ex quibus constet, principiis quam quibus in casibus proficere soleat, aut cui parti corporis opitulari.”—Is it of more use in this article and some others to make the color of the composition familiar, and fix it in the memory, than to show for what they were intended ; or to declare their powers and peculiar action?—There is a degree of sagacity in this we confess ourselves unable to fathom ; but to the ARBITRIUM COLLEGII REGALIS we must submit.—Nor can we divine why the ærugo, or the preparations of lead, should not have merited the same attention. However, we shall defer the discussion of the other new names, children of your invention, and shall only say, that we think they had better been founded on a system of philosophical



phical simplicity, which was the rule we attempted to pursue in conformity to the investigation of the justly celebrated philosophers from whence they derived their origin, and we doubt not, their consistency will be supported by the fresh facts which the criterion of time can only permanently establish; and proceed to review the more essential part of your work—the *MODUS PREPARANDI*.—And first we shall advert to the *PURIFICATION OF THE GUMS*, which stands as in the *Specimen alterum*, of which we have before shown our disapprobation, *in page 41 of the first part of this work*; and think we have there sufficiently proved the absurdity of the process, to which we refer the reader, and go on to the *PULPÆ*—which, when we looked over the first paragraph, we considered as meant only for extracting the pulp of hips, and that may be procured by this mode: Few, if any other, can be acquired by the same means;—That for the pulp of *Cassia* is certainly erroneous; for, from the method laid down in your *Pharmacopœia*, little or no pulp will be obtained, at least in the state in which the *cassia fistularis* is in this country. It would be obtained infinitely better, and be more productive, by boiling the pulp from the pod bruised, for then the pulp would be washed off from the inside and seeds, which might be strained through a proper sieve to let the pulp pass through, and retain the broken part of the pod; which done, the liquid might



might be evaporated to a proper consistence; and if it is intended to be kept, as we presume it is, by the remark of the Lumleian lecturer, one of your members, and the translator of your work, it should be mixed with a proper proportion of sugar, else will it, like most of the other pulps, run rapidly into a state of fermentation, and soon become acid.

Among the *Succi* what use is proposed from the inspissated juice of lemons, save an unnecessary and ridiculous expence; for the product from a very large proportion of the depurated juice will be extremely small indeed?—Are its virtues heightened by the process?—Does necessity require us to preserve it in this form, for any purpose?—Cannot we have always the expressed juice when requisite?—If so, why prescribe so trifling, so unnecessary, and so expensive an article?—The solving this query must remain with you.

Probably from what we have formerly said on the purification of opium with respect to waste of spirits in that process, you have now, instead of ordering the spirit to be evaporated as in the *Specimen alterum*, directed it to be drawn off by distillation; but pray what necessity is there for any spirit at all, since water alone will as effectually answer every purpose?—Here you can only

be accused of the want of proper attention in simplifying the operation—but what are we to say with respect to your prescription for the OLEUM VINI? Ecce!

℞. Alcoholis

Acidi vitriolici—singulorum MENSURA libram unam.

Is it consistent with chemical correctness to *measure* the vitriolic acid? Is there occasion for so large a proportion of that acid to produce the oleum vini? Or is a pound and a pint of materials of very different specific gravities equal? If we are to form our judgement by comparing the two prescriptions given us for acquiring this product, one in the Specimen alterum Pharmacopæiæ, the other in the Pharmacopæia itself of the royal college of physicians of London, we should conclude they once did not think so; but that on considering the matter very closely, they now maintain that opinion; for in the Specimen for procuring this oil, called there *oleum vitrioli dulce*, they order *alcohol* and *vitriolic acid*, of each a pound; but in the *improved* edition of this work, of each A PINT. But perhaps there may be some reason replete with wisdom for this most strange and singular alteration. In the process, where a pound of each is ordered, the oleum vini floats on the surface of the liquor thrown over into the recipient, “leniori igne” “continuetur distillatio; donec liquore recepto innataverit oleum vitrioli dulce”—Specimen alterum



P. L. p. 29.—Where a pint of each is directed, it remains floating on the watery liquor remaining in the retort, “*Manet oleum vini in retorta liquorem aquosum supernatans.*” Pharm. Londinensis, 1788—How can we account for these deviations? To what are we to attribute them?—*Ad arbitrium collegii medicorum Londinensis.*—But as it will not be sacrilege to say, from what has been above advanced, that this arbitrium may be sometimes fallacious, we would move, for the sake of chemists, apothecaries, and compounders of medicines, who dare think for themselves, and some there are who dare be so bold, that an amendment may be made in the prohibitory clause of the royal proclamation, where all who compound medicines are confined to the prescripts of this Pharmacopæia, for such medicaments as are therein contained, and become subject to the pain of royal displeasure, and legal punishment, if they deviate from them, that the words “*Errors excepted,*” should be inserted.

( In your prescription for the *oleum animale*, which is the invention of DIPPELIUS, with regard to your directions you have been extremely loose and negligent; besides not affording a process adequate to procuring it in its purest state, your formula runs,

℞. Olei cornu cervi p. libram unam.

Ter distilla.

Now



Now the oil in its proper state should be totally colourless, and may be so procured by judicious management ; but in the common mode of distillation, three times will seldom produce it sufficiently pure, it will require five, six, or sometimes more, before it becomes the quid desideratum—mixing it with quick lime or powdered charcoal into a paste, is said to be a great improvement, shortens the process, and makes the product more limpid, and with some apparent reason, as the substances keep down more of the gross matter, than would remain without such addition. Besides, directions ought to have been given for keeping it in its original state ; for if it is not guarded from the access of air, it will soon be spoiled by its free absorption of dephlogisticated air, on being too much exposed to the atmosphere, and lose its medicinal efficacy in a great measure :—a precaution, however apparently minute, so essentially necessary, that its omission ranks amongst the careless errors of your work.

In looking over the DIRECTIONS given for the preparation of the ACIDS, we could not avoid wishing that they had been more full, and explanatory, similar to the modes given for the *natron preparatum* and *kali acetatum*—at present they stand too loose, as if they were given with a careless inattention, or were designed only for the perusal of chemical adepts. But why you have changed your pre-

prescription for the *acidum acetosum* we cannot conceive, for it is certainly much altered for the worse. In your Specimen alterum you gave an acid from the decomposition of sal diureticus, now *kali acetatum*, by the means of the vitriolic acid, whose specific gravity was to that of distilled water, as 1,068 to 1,000. Now you give us an acid from verdigrease, much weaker, whose specific gravity is to that of distilled water, only as 1,050 to 1,000. Besides, if it is distilled from verdigrease by an injudicious operator, it will carry some particles of copper over in the distillation, and become a noxious medicine.

By the preparation of the KALI, which term you have adopted to express the vegetable alkali, there is no doubt but you mean to produce a pure salt of that nature; for which purpose you have ordered a solution of the pearl ash in water, then evaporation; and the liquor to be set by a whole night for the neutral salts, which are part of the composition, to crystallize—but that is not sufficient; for in order to have the alkali in its purest state, freed from those salts, the solution will require to be exposed to crystallization three times at least, else will it retain too great a share of vitriolized tartar. And with respect to the aqua kali, this we think might be made more extemporaneously, and better by dissolving the vegetable alkali in a just proportion of distilled water. Here we  
have



have a more certain medicine, and less alchymistical folly, for the prescription is a remnant of their absurd superstition.

Though here the term *aqua* may be allowed to stand, perhaps not improperly, where is the necessity of its addition to the *ammonia acetata*, formerly Minderus's spirit; which you still retain in its states of uncertain strength, notwithstanding it is so easily procured in a manner to have its powers more equal; the word *acetata* added to *ammonia* more elegantly expresses the compound without than with the addition of *aqua*, which is one of the most preposterous pleonasm ever invented; and ought to be expunged, particularly as the composition is never kept as a dry salt.

Against the *kali tartarifatum*, formerly *tartarum solubile* and *natron tartarifatum*, formerly *Sal Ruppellenfis*, there lie similar objections, if made according to your mandate; for you have limited the quantity of each ingredient—a pound of *kali* to three pounds of cream of tartar, in the first; and in the last, two pounds of cream of tartar to twenty ounces of *natron*; but as the crystals of tartar do not always contain an equal quantity of acid, these salts may not be always equally neutralized; nay even with the quantity of crystals of tartar ordered here, they may very often be possessed of a superabundancy of acid.—It would have



have been judicious if you had added to these prescriptions what you have done in that for the ammonia acetata — “ vel quantum fit ut *alkali* faturetur.” — There can remain no doubt relative to the propriety of such an addition, for certainly in chemical preparations, particularly such as are employed for medical purposes, there cannot be too great exactitude; for very slight deviations, flowing from negligence, and inattention, not to say anything of a want of chemical knowledge, and *arbitrary* conceit, leave compositions in so imperfect a state, nay often produce medicines so widely different from what was intended, or understood generally by terms annexed to them, that physicians in prescribing them are often foiled in their attempt of relieving, and the patient miserably mauled by their exhibition — And we will venture to assert that without regularity and nicety are observed in forming both chemical and Galenical compounds, such at least on whose action there is much dependence, the practice of physic becomes the practice of quackery, and the lives and healths of patients may as well be put into the hands of an impudent meddler, as a conscientious physician. — But to return to our subject; will you permit us to ask you, why you have still retained in your pharmacopœia several articles, and omitted others, relative to which we have supplied many wholesome hints in the different pages marked in the first part of this work? —

Why is the *Liquor volatilis*, C. C. (page 43) in its liquid form still kept so impure, and of such unequal strength?—Why the *ammonia acetata*, (page 50) so uncertain in its power?—Why have you omitted the *acid of tartar*, (page 55) and neglected the hints given you relative to the *purificatio nitri*; *magnesia usta*; in the same page—the *oleum sulphuratum*; *kali sulphuratum*, (page 52) *crocus antimonii*, (page 57)?—Or why been inattentive to facts of more importance with respect to the *antimonium muriatum*, (page 58) *ferrum ammoniacale*, (page 53) *purificatio hydrargyri*, *calomelas*, (page 67) and *sulphur antimonii præcipitatum*, (page 64)?—Do these inadvertencies arise from lack of chemical knowledge?—Are you incapable of examining minutely, or diving sufficiently deep into the powers of the chemical art?—Are you too careless to investigate closely the subject? do you think them too trifling for your consideration?—Or does your favourite ARBITRIUM forbid you to be charmed with the voice of truth, should it charm you ever so sweetly?—By some one or other of these considerations you must be actuated; but be whichever it may, you are certainly reprehensible—You are not, whatever you may suppose, however, guarded by the most supreme earthly authority, at liberty to wanton in your election, to be biaſſed in your determination, nor arbitrary in your adoption.—Your duty calls upon you; the power with which you are invested, requires



quires you ; and the consequences attendant on your decisions demand you to be acute in your discernment, indefatigable in your application, perfect in knowledge as far as the subject will permit ; and obedient only to sound reasoning and faithful experiment.—All which, whether you have or have not been, we must leave to the judgment of those who, conversant in these studies, will give themselves the trouble of travelling through these pages, and comparing them with the pharmacopæia in the dress in which it is now ushered to the public ; and proceed to examine a few of the other articles therein inserted. But first must observe, that we are glad to find the *sulphur antimonii alkalizatum* expunged. — In our last observations we could not avoid speaking our dislike, to foisting in a composition so disgraceful to the conductors of the Specimen ; and we heartily wish you had not supplied us with an opportunity of shewing our disapprobation of your *hydrargyrus nitratus ruber*. Here you have too palpably shewn your defect in chemical science.—Of what use is one dram of muriatic acid in the quantity of the hydrargyric solution you have prescribed?—Do you wish to unite a portion of hydrargyrus muriatus with it ? It may be thought so, for the muriatic acid having a greater affinity with the quicksilver than the nitrous, will first unite with it ; and if it remained mixed with the combination intended, would certainly inqumate



it; but fortunately this hydrargyrus muriatus will, during the calcination of the quicksilver sublimate, and afterwards be found in the neck of the retort. — According therefore to this prescription the *hydrargyrus nitratus ruber* will either not be pure, or there will be an unnecessary waste of part of the quicksilver, without any utility; but with respect to the *modus præparandi* we must beg leave to refer the reader to what we have delivered, page 69, and also to consult what is advanced relative to zinc, page 55, 56 of the first part of this work; and from page 45 to 48, what is said respecting to the method of procuring *spiritus ætheris vitriolici*; *æther vitriolicus*, & *spiritus ætheris nitrosi*; where on these heads he will find our remarks, and be supplied with an opportunity of forming his judgement respecting their validity.

Amongst the wines it is observable that you have adopted the hint given you of making the *vinum antimonii*, with the antimonium tartarizatum, dissolved in wine, calling it *vinum antimonii tartarizati*; but why then reserve the *vinum antimonii* made with the vitrum? — They are certainly both compositions similar with respect to their effect in properly proportioned doses. — This, it may be presumed, is a medical subtlety, one of the *arcana arcanorum*; which, as it exceeds the narrow limits of our comprehensions, we must leave with that wisdom by which it was formed; and

and advert to the *vinum rhubarbari*, in which there appears to be an unintelligible conceit, which we confess, to us is equally incomprehensible; we mean the addition of the *spiritus vinosus tenuior*.—Your Lumleian lecturer, in his note affixed to the English translation, tells us, and we conclude from your authority, “That this tincture being  
 “made with a menstruum more spirituous, is  
 “therefore more adapted to stomachs weakened  
 “by, *what is called*, hard drinking.” Here indeed is a reason; eight and forty drops of an impure spirit added to a dose, or two or three times the number, for the dose is from one to two or three spoonfuls, must have the proposed effect on the stomach of a *hard drinker*—credat Judæus.—The position is too puerile for its refutation to be attempted.—However, with respect to these wines, the tinctures, and decoctions, we shall not make any farther observations, than that we consider them too numerous, and that they might be usefully curtailed—And that wherever opiates enter into any compositions, it would have been infinitely better had they been totally rejected; as by keeping a tincture, powder, and pill of that ingredient, they might be added to any composition extemporaneously, and the precise dose ascertained, which is a material consideration in the administration of so powerful a remedy, and a number of egregious mistakes be prevented, which are apt to arise from ignorance, inattention,  
 and



and want of integrity in too many of the compounders of medicaments, especially the trading chemists.—All which it was the business of the College attentively to have considered, and taken such steps as might have effectually prevented those mischiefs, the community in general becomes subject to from neglect in this particular.

But to pursue our subject more closely.—You have given us a prescription under the title of *Spiritus Ætheris vitriolici compositus*, said to be the *liquor anodynus Hoffmanni*, by your Lunleian lecturer, who refers us to different parts of the work of that author, which on consulting, we do not find to be the case; we rather suppose that he meant nothing more nor less by his liquor than a spiritus vitrioli dulcis, well impregnated with æther; or a very highly rectified spirit of wine, with an oil, which he calls, “æthereum, saporis & odoris gratissimi & penetratissimi aromatici,” for in speaking of its virtues, he says,

“Hoc oleum aromaticum recens exquisite solvitur in spiritu vini rectificatissimo, ipsique saporem, & odorem & virtutem confert anodynam & ac sedativam, in omnibus doloribus & spasminis utilissimam;” after giving an account of the mode of preparing it from VALERIUS CORDUS, CROLLIUS, and GESNER, and adding his own process, which, with respect to the proportion of the ingredients, are widely different from yours —  
for

for he makes use of a much larger proportion of spirits of wine than vitriolic acid;—you, infinitely more of the latter than the former.

Hoffman says, “ Proceſſum fideliter, meo more, “ communico—ſumitur una libra olei vitrioli per “ rectificationem ab omni phlegmate liberati, & “ libras ſex ſpiritus vini rectificatiſſimi, qui nec “ veſtigium aquæ continet,” &c. *De vero oleo vitrioli dulce*, p. 495, vol. iii.—You have nearly copied the formula of the Paris pharmacopæia, wherein we find a liquor anodynus mineralis, ſuppoſed only to be that of Hoffman’s; for there in two ounces of the ætherial ſpirit they diſſolve twelve drops of this oleum dulce, which is almoſt exactly the proportion you have commanded.—Shall we be called ſevere, if we preſume to ſmile on this occaſion? How can we avoid it, when we ſee a recipe given to the world as if taken from the works of the very author, and placed in your pharmacopæia, though incontestably the product of another foreign pharmacopæia only; when we are referred to many places of the works of that very author, which afford no ſhadow of ſupport for the foundation of ſuch a ſuppoſition—*Riſum teneatis amici?*

In your SYRUPUS ROSÆ, as well as your PULVIS ALOETICUS CUM FERRO, vice pilulæ ecphracticæ, we find you have condeſcended to purſue  
our



our hints, and form them with some degree of exactness, freeing them from that disgraceful incongruity under which they lay in your Specimen. But though you have altered the *PULVIS È MYRRHA COMPOSITUS*, we cannot avoid thinking the alteration might have been more judicious. Can you suppose, that adding the sabine is an ample compensation for throwing out the *asa-fœtida*, *sagapenum*, and *opoponax*? The first of which is held in the highest estimation in the medical world, and allowed to be the most efficacious of the fetid gums as a deobstruent; it is also antispasmodic and anodyne, and highly effectual in promoting all the fluid secretions in either sex—Had you omitted the rue and castor, and retained the gums, at least a proper proportion of the *asa-fœtida*, it would have been a laudable amendment; but at present it stands forth as declaratory of your rage for alteration, but not of improvement—the only point which can support the change of any single medicine.—With regard to your powders, we should be glad to be informed of the necessity for the insertion of the *pulvis aloeticus c. guaiaco*; *pulvis e chelis cancrorum compositus*; *pulvis contrayervæ compositus*; *pulvis e cretâ compositus c. opio*; *pulvis e scammonio c. aloë*; in the title of which last there is an absolute inaccuracy; for it certainly as much merits the title of *compositus*, as that which stands before it, being formed of the same ingredients with the addition of aloes; or the *pulvis e scam-*  
*monio*

*monio c. calomelane.*—Here we are led to believe you thought more of quantity than quality; you was afraid of reducing your forces, disliking to do that with few things, which you had been accustomed to perform with many; and as many of your pills and electuaries were disbanded, your troop of powders must be augmented to supply deficiencies; by which similar reason you seem to have been actuated in your plaisters—For, if any person will examine your formidable list, they will find that fifteen might with propriety be reduced to four—viz. *emplastrum lythargyri*; *emplastrum lythargyri c. mercurio*; *emplastrum resinosum*; or which would be still better, a plaister made of a proper consistence to mix occasionally with cantharides; and an *emplastrum resinosum*, formed of proper proportions of pix Burgundica, cera citrina, and turpentine; or should the gums be thought preferable to Burgundy pitch, mastic, or thus, might supply its place—This plaister would serve as a basis for the whole farrago of those plaisters, where the aromatic distilled oils, camphire, &c. make a principal ingredient; the advantage here attained must be sufficiently obvious; for these plaisters are certainly most efficacious, applied when recently made; as by long keeping, which is commonly the case, they are apt to spoil, lose their power, and frustrate the intent of the practitioner. The *emplastrum resinosum*, was it made of a soft consistence, would serve the purpose of mixing with



it any powders, if necessary, which can seldom happen, as a few drops of the essential oil of any seeds will be adequate to two drams of their substance, and consequently be more elegant in composition, and full as effectual; and with respect to the ointments, as few should be kept as possible, as they are apt soon to grow rancid—Why in the name of common sense ought those to be inserted in a pharmacopæia, that are made so extemporaneously, since time renders them offensive, and alters even their properties? — What need have we for the *unguentum calcis hydrargiri albæ*; *unguentum bellebori albi*; *unguentum hydrargyri mitius*; *unguentum picis*; *unguentum sulphuris*, or *unguentum tutiæ*?—Six or seven would answer every purpose, and your catalogue numbers no less than sixteen.—What a profusion of non-significants! how abundant in trifles! how replete with super-numeraries! Suppose one *digestive ointment* was kept made with wax, oil, turpentine, resin, or gum elemi, if that pleased better; one *unguentum ex hydrargyro*; its reduction would not be wonderfully laborious according to your pharmacopæia; was it required to be weaker, the *unguentum ex hydrargyro nitrato*; the *unguentum e spermate ceti*; *unguentum sambuci*; and *unguentum cantharidis*; would not these answer every purpose even you could wish?—We allow of the *unguentum sambuci*, not from its efficacy, but because it is often called for—The *unguentum cantharidis*; from the gentleness of its action as prepared

pared by your prescription. — And this we think a copious list; considering the use which may be made of the sperma ceti ointment; for this might be occasionally mixed when required, with cerussa, calx zinci, calx hydrargyri; or any other powders agreeable to the pleasure of the prescriber. — However, before we conclude these observations, we cannot help expressing our astonishment that you should still retain the PULVIS E CHELIS CANCRO-  
RUM, which, whether considered in a chemical, pharmaceutical, or medical light, is certainly one of the most impure of the absorbent earths, as we have before shown in *page 81 of the first part of this work*; besides which we must add, that as these substances are most valuable in proportion as they dissolve quickest with acids, and as they are used chiefly with that intention, either merely to absorb offensive acidities in the primæ viæ, or, uniting with them, pass into the habit, and produce the effect of neutral salts, certainly the testæ ostreorum, or the creta, are substances infinitely superior; may not this omission therefore be attributed to want of chemical knowledge, or to your contempt of close investigation in these matters; otherwise, had you condescended to consult the works of men, who had employed their time in forming experiments to discover the component parts of bodies, and ascertain their action, you would have found universally their opinions directly militating against the use of this substance,



on account of its impurity, and difficult solubility; and preferring those we have mentioned especially for medical purposes, but you have yielded to the impulses of your arbitrium; and perhaps it is to your slavish obedience to this irresistible power, that we may justly attribute a number of the errors with which your pharmacopœia abounds; perhaps it is owing to this cause that we are allowed to apply the lines of DR. GARTH, with a little alteration :

That now no grand inquiries are descry'd,  
 Bold error reigns, where knowledge should preside,  
 As if the chemic art was laid aside. }

And it is, perhaps, to this that we are left to lament the want of perfection in your work, and drop the tear of regret at its unfortunate fate—quia undas nunc Rubiconis transiit; which might have been prevented, had you followed the advice of the admired HOFFMAN;

“ Quemadmodum ii, qui in veritate inquirenda,  
 “ omni posito præjudicio, (*arbitrio*) nullius opini-  
 “ onis servi sunt; sed libero animo solidoque ju-  
 “ dicio cuncta perpendunt, de opinionibus præ-  
 “ denter dubitant, & nil nisi quod durum, fa-  
 “ cile, simplex, atque intellectui planum est,  
 “ amplectuntur, & optima quæque ex omnibus seli-  
 “ gunt, laude digni sunt; — ita quoque cordati  
 “ medici est, nulli sectæ vel hypothese, in totum se

“ se mancipare, sed totius omnia suis examinare  
 “ ponderibus, & quæ usui sunt, ac veritati consen-  
 “ tiunt, seligere, variis opinionibus, quæ perni-  
 “ ciosarum diffensionum, in praxi, & theoria  
 “ genetrices sunt, rejectis & prorsus repudiatis.”—

Of the Pharmacopœia collegii regalis Londi-  
 nensis, as it stands in its purest form, here should  
 we take our leave, nor think of adverting to its  
 translation, did there not appear a necessity of vin-  
 dicating Mr. Scheele from an accusation brought  
 against him by the translator, who, in his notes  
 upon *hydrargyrus muriatus mitis*, says, “ This is  
 “ the mercurius dulcis præcipitatus of the Pharm.  
 “ Lond. fol. 1721, p. 145, adopted by the Edin-  
 “ burgh, 1744, under the name of *mercurius præ-*  
 “ *cipitatus albus*;—and after that, by the Swedish  
 “ Dispensatory, under the name of *mercurius dulcis*;  
 “ as it has been supposed by many to be a new in-  
 “ vention of Mr. Scheele, and been recommended  
 “ as an easy and cheap substitute for calomel, it has  
 “ grown pretty much into use,” &c.—It may be  
 supposed that your Lumleian lecturer has made an  
 egregious mistake, or followed the opinion of  
 others as closely as he translated your recipe for  
*confectio aromatica*; where, for half a pound of  
 zedoary and saffron, you had inserted half an  
 ounce;—for Mr. Scheele has certainly a right,  
 though not to be called the inventor of the mer-  
 curius præcipitatus albus, yet to be stiled the in-  
 ventor



ventor of the hydrargyrus muriatus mitis, made in the wet method, and shewing by indisputable experiment it was calomel—that is, quicksilver united in the same proportion with muriatic acid, by means of the double attraction taking place in the process; which Mr. Scheele thus proves. He first shews, that the nitrous acid can take up a greater part of quicksilver, when kept in a boiling state for some time, than what it really calcines, or in other words, renders oxigene, by giving it its dephlogisticated air; that part which is not calcined, Mr. Scheele thinks the nitrous acid keeps in its metallic state, and that when afterwards the solution of common salt is mixed boiling with it, marine acid combines with the quicksilver exactly in that proportion as in the calomel.—Mr. Scheele having found that common salt possesses the same property as the sal ammoniac, in promoting a solution of any particles of corrosive sublimate that might be mixed with it, has pointed out a quantity of common salt, greater than necessary, for combining with the quicksilver, in order to dissolve those particles, if there should be any. Now these principles have never been laid down by any man before Mr. Scheele, to whom we are indebted for this illustration of calomel; and indeed those principles are very essential to be known; for let the same quantity of quicksilver be dissolved in double that proportion of nitrous acid used for making calomel, and let it be dissolved in a very gentle

heat,

heat, then the quicksilver will become calcined by absorbing dephlogisticated air from the nitrous acid, and form corrosive sublimate by the addition of a solution of common salt, and not produce calomel.—Besides, we must beg leave to contradict the Lumleian lecturer with respect to the mercurius præcipitatus albus being the invention of the London Committee of 1721; for it is neither more nor less than the white præcipitate spoken of by Lemery, and all the authors who have written on the elements of chemistry, in the beginning of this century.

Much, much more might we say with respect to the commentator, but in pity to ourselves we forbear; for it is extremely painful to travel through heavy roads, where neither amusement or information is to be acquired.

Indeed we cannot think one of Shakespeare's characters altogether inapplicable;—"Gratiano speaks  
 " an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man  
 " in all Venice.—His reasons are as two grains  
 " of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you  
 " seek all day ere you find them, and when you  
 " have them, they are not worth the search;"—  
 With regard to the Reviewers, how happy are we to have roused the delicacy of their feelings! We wish—we cordially wish, that it was exerted on many other occasions. For how many authors have smarted  
 under



under the severity of their lash? How many have felt the stroke of their sarcastic pens without so much as producing one sentence to speak the provocation, or prove their justice? We have *held up*, and only laughed at the absurdities we met with in our passage, and made our general censure relative, which, whether merited or not, the world is left at liberty to judge.—See page 88 of the first part of this work.—But “if we have shot our arrow o’er the house, and hurt a brother,” let it be shot back again; for as we travel in the pursuit only of truth, we embrace her with equal avidity, whether she comes in the harsh tones of a severe critic, or the soft and gentle whispers of a favorite mistress; and say for ourselves, that if we have rashly dashed into a flood of rage, we shall not be afraid of the horrors that may rattle round our heads, firmly fixed in the opinion of Horace,

Justum & tenacem propositi virum,  
 Non civium ardor prava jubentium,  
*Non vultus instantis tyranni*  
 Mente quatit solida, neque Auster  
 Dux in quieti turbidus Adriæ,  
 Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus:  
 Si fractus illabatur orbis,  
 Impavidum ferient ruinæ.